

1/22/07

Montana Department of Environmental Quality
Attn:

Porter Ranch
H.C. 40 Box 103
Decker, MT 59025

To Whom IT May Concern:

We would like to apologize for not being able to have a representative from your family at your meeting. Thank you so much for taking time out of your busy schedule to listen to our concerns.

As a family ranch operating in southern Montana since 1943, we believe that the water from CBM should be used to benefit our ranch. We have been in a drought for 10 plus years now. We have struggled to water our cows for these years and have bought the majority of our hay. This year being the worst year of the drought we had no choice but to haul about 500 gallons of water to our cows this past summer everyday. This water was produced CBM water that we utilized. Attached are photos of us getting water and unloading it into water tanks for our cattle. The drought has not only burdened us with haulage of water but the economic cost of hay as well. Since there wasn't any rain for dry land hay production we had to purchase over 150 tons of hay.

We think it is really distressing that this produced water is being discharged into Tongue River and taken away from us. This water can be and will be used to benefit our ranching operation in the future. If the state would allow us to utilize this water on our ranch were it is produced so that we can do the following options.

One option for use of this water is to put it into dry reservoirs. We have seven reservoirs in our summer pasture that is about 3200 acres in size, every one of these are dry at this time. If the water is put into these watering holes, the water would be there for years to come, even after the CBM producers leave, for us to use. This would let us utilize our pastures better. This would also let the water go back into the shallow water zones that have dried up from the drought.

A second option is to treat the water and use it to irrigate with. We feel that our hay fields would produce enough hay for use to stop buying hay from out of the area and transporting with in. This is a high expense, not to mention the risk of bringing in noxious weeds into our region that are not already here. We paid 110 dollars a ton this year for the hay. That is 16,500 dollars we put into hay this year. With hay shortages and rising prices this could be cut in half or not even a factor if we could produce hay on our own ranch with the operation of this water.

The third option is to use it for fire suppression. As you know this summer was very bad in the state. We had several fires in the area. One problem we ran into while trying to put these fires out was no there wasn't any water resources close. Thanks to the CBM companies they brought in water trucks for the fire trucks to load out of when needed.

In conclusion we are sure that there are many more options out there for use of this water. But these three are for sure good ones that could be used. To put the water in dry reservoirs, use it to irrigate hay dry lands, and also to fight wildfires. We would like you to come down and visit with the landowners and see for yourself first hand how it will impact the land and their lives.

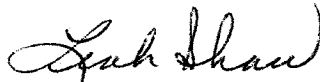
We greatly appreciate your time and consideration of our comments and should you have any questions you may contact us at (406) 757-2293 or shaw9316@msn.com.

Thank you,

Fra Porter



Owner


Leah Shaw

Dustin Shaw

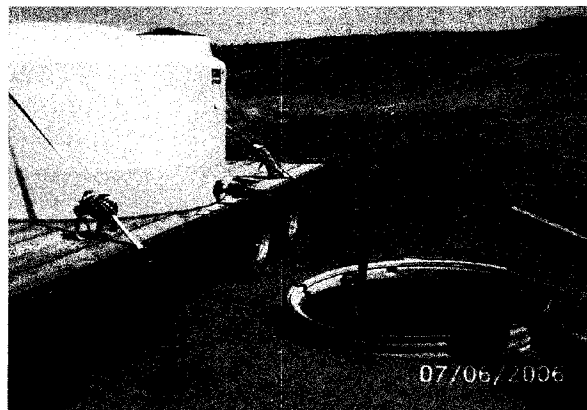
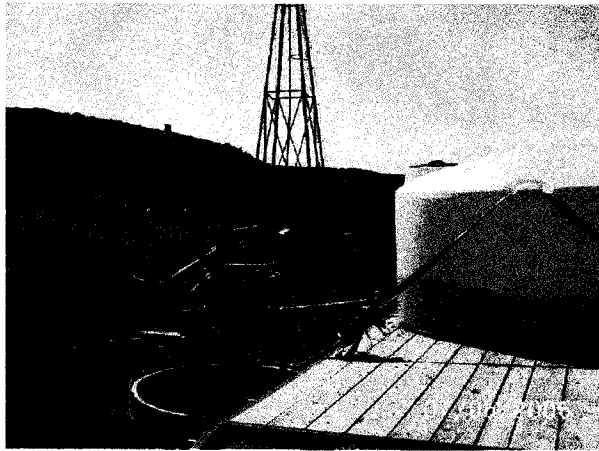
Manager and Grandson

Daughter

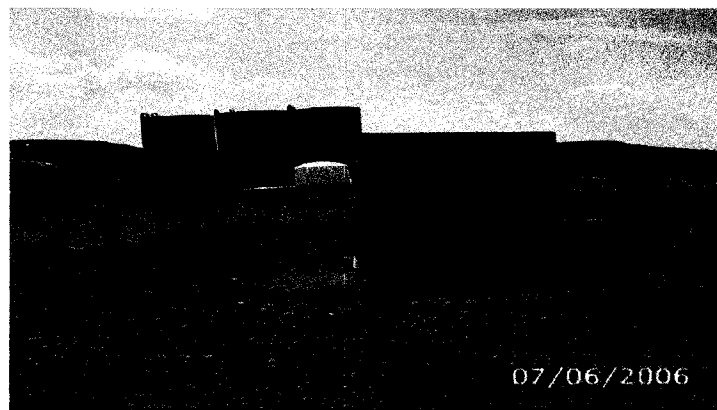
This is one of the seven dry
reservoirs on our place. That could
be utilized for CBM water.



These are pictures at a well that the production has dropped in the past year because of the drought.



Here we are loading water at
storage area of CBM water.



This is pictures of us hauling water
to water tanks this past summer.

